REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 8-19 are new.

The specification has been amended to correct a grammatical and a spelling error. Support for each new and amended claim is found at the originally filed claims and throughout the originally filed specification.

No new matter is added.

The indefiniteness rejection of Claim 3 is obviated by replacement of the phrase "the same are" with the phrase the "salt tablet is." Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

The anticipation rejection of Claims 1 and 3-4 as being unpatentable in view of Narayan is respectfully traversed because the reference does not describe or suggest forming a salt tablet from dehydrated granules having a particle size distribution between 0.8 mm and 1.1 mm, features of present Claim 1, and the advantages flowing from these features.

Present Claim 1 is drawn to a water soluble salt tablet having between 97.5% and 98.8% of NaCl, and in addition, iodine, potassium ions, calcium ions, and magnesium ions, the ions being present as chlorides and or sulphates. The salt tablet of present Claim 1 is formed from dehydrated granules having a particle size distribution between 0.8 mm and 1.1 mm, wherein the Mg ions are present in an amount between 0.4% and 0.9%, the percentages being on a dry weight basis.

Narayan does not describe or suggest forming a salt tablet from dehydrated granules having a particle size distribution between 0.8 mm and 1.1mm, and the advantage flowing therefrom.

Narayan is concerned with overcoming wastage of salt fines having a particle size of lower than 500 microns (e.g., lower than 0.5 mm) (see page 2, lines 20-27 of Narayan). To recycle these salt fines, that would otherwise constitute waste, Narayan describes a process of

starting with salt fines having a particle size of less than 500 microns (e.g., 0.5 mm) and mixing the salt fines with potassium chloride (see page 6, lines 26-28 of Narayan) to form a mixture. Next, in one embodiment, up to a 10% aqueous solution of water-soluble chloride or sulphate salt of calcium and/or magnesium is sprayed on to the mixture (see page 7, lines 2-5, of Narayan) to form a wet salt. Alternatively, the water soluble chloride or sulphate salt of calcium or magnesium is added as a powder to the mixture along with 5-15% water (see page 7, lines 12-14, of Narayan) to form a wet salt. Finally, Narayan performs a granulation of the wet salt. In one alternative, the granulation is performed to form free flowing, non-tableted, spherical particles (e.g., granules) with a size range of 500 to 5000 microns (e.g., 0.5 to 5 mm) (see page 7, line 27 through page 8, line 1 of Narayan). In another alternative, Narayan describes "taking the wet salt mix from the mixer and granulating it using a tableting method to a diameter of 2,000 to 10,000 microns, and preferably a diameter of 2,000 to 5, 5000 microns" (see page 8, lines 16-19, of Narayan). Narayan further describes that the "moisture level of the granules made by the methods above is maintained between 1-7% and preferably 4-6%..." (see Narayan, page 8, lines 21-22).

Thus, in one embodiment, as described above, Narayan forms non-tableted, free-flowing spherical particles of a wet salt with a size range of 0.5 to 5 mm. Narayan's particles for this embodiment are free flowing (e.g., not tableted) and contain water at a level of between 1-7%. In contrast to Narayan, the salt tablet of present Claim 1 is tableted and formed from granules that are dehydrated

Further, in another embodiment, as described above, Narayan employs a tableting method to form tablets (that appear to be single granules) of from 2 mm to 10 mm in diameter, with a water content of from 1-7%. In contrast to Narayan, the salt tablet of present

Claim 1 is formed from dehydrated particles having a particle size distribution of from 0.8 to 1.1 mm.

Thus, Narayan does not describe or suggest salt tablets formed from dehydrated granules that have a particle size distribution between 0.8 mm and 1.1 mm.

Further, as described in the originally filed specification, at page 2, lines 10-13, Narayan obtains "granules whose consistency is surely poor and which – especially –have a low solubility into water to which the granulated salt composition has to be added when it is used." In contrast, the salt tablets of present Claim 1 are "easily dissolved in water" (see page 3, line 7, of the originally filed specification) and are able to be "easily handled and stored, without undergoing damage or breakage" (see page 3, lines 4-5, of the originally filed specification).

The salt tablet of present Claim 1, and the claims depending therefrom, is different from Narayan, because the salt table of present Claim 1 is made by a process that includes tableting dehydrated granules having a particle size distribution between 0.8 mm and 1.1mm, and this process is not described or suggested by Narayan. Also, as described above, the salt tablet of present Claim 1 and the product of Narayan behave differently in terms of consistency and solubility in water. Different compositions behave differently under identical situations. Narayan therefore cannot anticipate present Claim 1 and the claims depending therefrom. Withdrawal of the anticipation rejection is respectfully requested.

The obviousness rejection of Claim 2 as being unpatentable in view of Narayan and Aquaron is respectfully traversed. As described above, Narayan does not describe or suggest the salt tablet of present Claim 1 and the claims depending therefrom. Aquaron, whom the Office relies upon to provide iodine in selected amounts, does not remedy the deficiencies of Narayan. Withdrawal of the obviousness rejection is respectfully requested.

Applicants request rejoinder of the withdrawn claims, and submit the present application is now in condition for allowance. Early notification to this effect is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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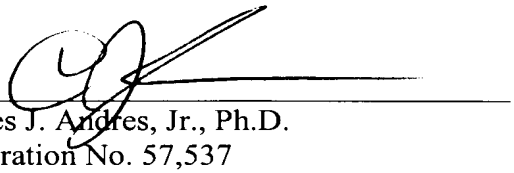

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